

STATINTL

LOOSE TALK COSTS \$3.5 MILLION

The high cost of erroneously calling a person a Communist or a Red sympathizer was demonstrated this week in a libel case in New York City. John Henry Faulk, who rejoiced in his eminence as the fourth most popular disc jockey in the metropolitan area, brought the action after he had been so characterized by Aware, Inc., a publication, and others, including the late owner of a supermarket chain which once had a store in Oswego, Laurence Johnson. Verdicts totalled \$3.5 million.

The questions raised about his loyalty, Mr. Faulk contended, had caused him loss of employment and other hardships, personal and financial. The jury agreed, and while the case will be appealed and the sum awarded is likely to be modified, he has nonetheless won a signal victory. It is a victory, moreover, for freedom from harassment as well.

In the great resurgence of political consciousness its organizers like to call the Conservative movement, overzealous, private groups are freely and frequently disparaging the motives of sincerely loyal people, holding them up

to ridicule and scorn, and casting doubt upon their loyalty to the United States. All too frequently this is done without supporting information, without the benefit of official scrutiny and without regard to the facts. The people who chivvied Mr. Faulk, for example, found out dramatically the magnitude of their irresponsibility.

The United States is rather well protected against serious Communist activity by such pros as the FBI, military intelligence and the CIA. They devote full time to such activity, have every resource at their disposal and are carefully trained in their work. By contrast, the private hunters of witches generally have little more than an over-developed sense of suspicion and an under-developed instinct for truth and justice.

It is one thing to describe persons as leftists or socialists—most of President Kennedy's closest advisors may be so categorized—but quite another to question their loyalty to this government or brand them as Communists. The Faulk case should serve to tone down the wild accusations of the fanatics, and in so doing will have served a real public purpose.

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